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Editors Note: It is hard to believe that a whole year has gone by since the first issue of the newsletter. It has been a very busy year and more and more of the 34,759 countable women veterans are coming forward to register with me and find out about their potentially earned benefits. I am getting phone calls and e-mails asking questions and for guidance. I now have 165 registered with me, but have so many, many more to go. If you know of a woman veteran who hasn't registered, please give them a copy of this newsletter. On page 6 of every newsletter is the registration form. Please complete it and send it in, this will put you on the list to receive the newsletter. If I can help just one woman get the benefits she earned then I have accomplished a goal. And that's how it happens- one veteran at a time, until I reach every one of you. Don't forget to send in your comments, questions and your photos with your write-ups. I am also looking for funny stories that happened when you were on active duty that you would like to share. Keep in touch and don't miss MVC's first free **Women Veteran's Conference** in St Joseph.

1ST WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE



In celebration of our 1 year anniversary of the women veterans newsletter and in the continuing effort to reach women veterans in Missouri, the Missouri Veterans Commission's 1st women veterans conference is being held in St Joseph at the National Guard Armory, 301 N. Woodbine on November 3, 2006 from 12-4 p.m. Honored guests include 4 State Representatives and the Mayor of St Joseph. Guest speakers will include the Woman coordinator from the VA Regional Office, the woman representative from the KC Vet Center, the woman program manager from the VA Health Care, a representative from the VA Nursing homes, the VA cemeteries and from the work force development center. A panel of Veteran Service Officers will also be there for a question and answer session. St Joseph was selected so that women veterans in the NW Region of the state could have access to information without having to drive to a larger city. We are targeting the rural areas as well as the greater KC area. However, all women veterans are welcome to attend. Additional women veterans conferences are planned for the other 3 regions of the state at a later date. Information booths and vendors will also be available. Registration begins at 12:00 with free hot dogs and drinks. Opening ceremonies with the honor guard begins promptly at 13:00. If you have lost your discharge and would like to obtain a new one, forms will be available to send off for your discharge. Plan to attend; it will be an action packed afternoon of information, sharing ideas, and camaraderie. For more information, or to RSVP, please call 816/387-2841 or email: Karen.Etzler@mvc.dps.mo.gov. Hope to see you there.



Women in Uniform

PAST

KATHY LEE



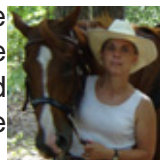
I joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1966 in my 3rd year of nursing school because I needed assistance with tuition. I thought serving in the military would be exciting. I was a 1LT and I served 1967-1968 Basic at Fort Sam Houston, then on to Walter Reed Army Hospital. In 1968-1969 I was at Chu Lai Vietnam serving with the 312 Evac & 91st Evac Hospital. My year in Vietnam was the best and the worst year of my life. I learned what sacrifices are made for my freedom. I grew up a lot and learned not to take life for granted. I took care of our servicemen in Vietnam and now I take care of Veterans as a Veteran Service Officer. I feel that I have come full circle. I spent 35 years as a nurse in the private sector, now I work for the VFW Dept. of Missouri.



CARLA CALDWELL



I enlisted in the U.S. Army Nov. 14, 1979. I was trained as a 67Y10 Attack Helicopter Mechanic AH-1 Cobra. I forwarded on to Germany for 3 years and performed jobs such as PLL, Truck Driver with 5 wheel trailers, plus doing my MOS during this time. In Oct. 1982, I joined the Arkansas Army National Guard, as a Telecommunications Specialist. I was selected AGR in May 1985 as the Unit Training NCO, plus as Supply Sergeant, Motor Pool Sergeant and other assigned duties while assigned to 212th Signal Battalion in Danville, AR. We were mobilized in Jan. 1991 for Operation Desert Storm. My next assignment was with the 233rd Air Defense Artillery at Booneville, AR. In Sept. 1995, I was informed the unit was being disbanded.. My next job was with 135th Field Artillery in Sedalia, MO in Jan. 1996 until Sept. 1999, when I was assigned to Whiteman AFB. I retired in May 2004 with 25 years of service with Army/MOARNG. I now work for the Missouri Military Honors Program, Mike Team. I am still serving proudly, and would not change a thing in my military career. The military has made me what I am today.



PRESENT

COL GLORIA TWILLEY



I entered the USAF in 1982 after completing nursing school. My brother was my biggest influence for joining, he was in the Navy and was enjoying the opportunities afforded him to travel and advance his education. Nursing is a very rewarding career; the military affords nurses a lot of autonomy to exercise their training/skills. The military presents nurse officers with many rewarding challenges with leadership roles as well as advanced schooling. Nurses were given the opportunity to become commanders in 1992, and they have to compete against all the corps, not just nurses. I became a group commander at Whiteman AFB in 2005 and to be able to lead and mentor other medical personnel has been the most rewarding experience for me. I enjoy patient care and having my background helps me facilitate definitive care for patients.

SrA BRITTANY MUSLEH



My Dad was the biggest influence I had in joining the Air Force. He served 20 years in the Army and said what great things the military would do for me. So, instead of joining the Army and doing what he and my Mother did, I joined the Air Force on Oct. 1, 2003. Currently I am a Vehicle Operator at Whiteman AFB, MO. I was deployed to 332 Air Expeditionary Wing, Balad Air base for 6 months and then came back to Whiteman. When I went to Iraq, I was only 19 years old and I loved the opportunity I was given when we did gun trucks with the Army. Typically the Air Force does not go outside the wire, so when I was made the lead vehicle commander in the LMTV (new 5 ton gun truck) it was very rewarding for me. Serving in the Air Force has had a tremendous effect on my life. Being able to see the impact of what you do in war is very rewarding.



Ask Karen



Q. I read your last newsletter and read the question about sending women veterans care packages. I was wondering, since I do not know anyone serving overseas, who would I contact about sending a care package?

Cathy Bowman, Savannah, MO

A. I asked around about this, and the best answer I received was from my son, Jerry. He told me about a web site www.anysoldier.com. This is an excellent web site started by an Iraq soldiers' father. Please check it out; soldiers register with this site what they need in care packages and also just a name to send some words of encouragement. Unfortunately soldiers addresses can only be accessed on the web, so if you do not have a computer or computer skills, ask a friend or a librarian to assist you.

Q. I have lost my discharge, how can I get a replacement?

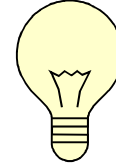
Anonymous

A. First, check with your local court house, recorder of deed's office, to see if you filed it there when you got out of the service.

Next, check with the A/G's office in Jefferson City. The archives have many of the discharges but not all. Call 1-888-526-6664 ext 9683. Liz is the specialist there and she is very helpful.

Lastly you can send a completed form SF-180 to the National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Blvd, St Louis MO 63132.

DID YOU KNOW:



✓ That the VA has a website to locate some veterans graves. It is :http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

Just enter the first and last name of the veteran and it will pull up his/her military information, date of birth, date of death and grave location.

✓ That there is a website/address that sells flag/medal holders. It is: USMilitaryStuff, PO Box 583, Icard, NC 28666, 866/835/3038, or www.usmilitarystuff.com There are also many more sites on the web, this is just one of many.

✓ If you go to the web site at www.letssaythanks.com you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and send it to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to a some member of the armed services. It is FREE and it only takes a second.

✓ That you can now reserve a plot next to you for your spouse, if you and your spouse are both veterans, in a VA National Cemetery. This can be done when the first veteran is buried. If your spouse is not a veteran then they can be buried in the SAME plot as you.

✓ That you can apply for an increase to a service connected disability as it worsens over the years.

✓ That there is no time limit on applying for a service connected (S/C) disability. So, if you have an injury or a disability that was caused during your military service, you can apply now. This may open some doors for you to VA health care if you are currently over the income limit for care now.

✓ Veterans who were sexually assaulted can file a claim for compensation, and can request a female service officer to file the claim.



PROBLEMS WOMEN FACE RETURNING FROM WAR:

More than 400 military women working in Iraq, Afghanistan and the region have reported they were victims of sexual assault from 2003 through May 2006, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

More female soldiers report mental health concerns than their male comrades: 24% compared with 19%, according to a Pentagon study released in March.

Roughly 40% have musculoskeletal problems that doctors say likely are linked to lugging too-heavy and ill-fitted equipment.

A considerable number -28%- return with genital and urinary systems infections.

There are gender-related societal issues that make transitioning tough, psychologists who work with female veterans say. Women are more likely to worry about body images issues, especially if they have visible scars, and their traditional roles as caregivers in civilian life can set them back when they return.

Information obtained from Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, by Raquel Rutledge

UPCOMING EVENTS

1st Missouri Women Veterans Conference, National Guard Armory in St. Joseph, November 3, 12-4 p.m. See our article on page one for more details.

Rose Petal Ceremony - Branson, November 6, 10:30 a.m. at the Settle Inn, Fountain Entrance. Luncheon at Noon, cost is \$14.00, you must register. For more information, contact Mary Ann Slivka, Chairperson at 800/935-1199, ext. 317, mslivka@bransoncvb.com, or Barbara Riggle, Secretary/Treasurer at 417/339-6823, babsriggle@cox.net or visit the website at www.bransonwomenveterans.com, and click on the November Events link.

Tribute to Women Veterans - American Legion Post 404, St. Louis, November 18, at the Christy Banquet Center, 5856 Christy Blvd., 11am to 3pm. This will mark the 21st Anniversary of a special day of tribute that has become a tradition in St. Louis. Reservations required by November 7th, 2006. Please send \$20.00 per person payable to St. Louis Service Women's Post 404, C/O Shirley Janes, 10903 Suanis Ct., St. Louis, MO 63123. Any questions, contact Shirley Janes at 314/853-4746, or email at post404@stlouiswomenvets.org.



AM I ENTITLED TO ANY MONEY FROM THE VA?

As a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) I get asked that question quite often. When I got out of the service I thought that unless you served 20 years in the military you did not qualify for any monetary benefits from your time in the service. It wasn't until I became a VSO that I realized how wrong I was. Let me explain a few of the benefits in which you or your spouse could qualify for money from the VA:

COMPENSATION is a benefit paid to a veteran who was injured while on active duty. How much money you make or the value of your net worth has nothing to do with this particular benefit. So if you were hurt while on active duty, even if it was not the result of combat, you can file a claim for a service connected (S/C) disability. If the VA approves your claim for a S/C disability and you are rated by the VA at 10% or higher, the VA will pay you COMPENSATION. In other words you will be compensated for the injury you received while serving your country.

DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) If the cause of your death can be tied to an injury you received while on active duty, whether or not you had filed for compensation, your spouse may qualify. DIC is a benefit paid to the widow/widower of veteran who's death can be related to an injury the veteran received while serving his/her country.

PENSION is an income based benefits that requires at least 90 days of active duty service prior to 1980 and at least one day of that service must have been during a declared war time period. After 1980 it requires 2 years of active duty service and again at least one day during the war time period. Since it is an income based benefit you must fall within guidelines for your monthly income and for your total net worth. You also have to be over 65 years old OR in a nursing home OR be permanently and totally disabled at any age, and have an honorable discharge.

If you are the widow/widower of a veteran, who's death has nothing to do with his/her service, you may be eligible for **DEATH PENSION**. To be eligible your income must fall within the guidelines and the veteran must have the required military service time as stated above. Age, being in a nursing home, or being permanently disabled, which are qualifying factors for the Veteran, does NOT apply to the widow/widower.

So if there are any veterans/widows/widowers reading this and feel they may qualify for one of the benefits described above, please contact your nearest veteran service officer (VSO) to see if you qualify.

Submitted by:
Karen Etzler, VSO, MVC



A Special Thank You

The Stitch and Chatter Club has donated 9 hand made lap robes to the Missouri Veterans Home in Cameron. This Club is based in Andrew County and its president is Doris Rodewald. Their Club has been making lap robes for several years now and has donated them to nursing homes around the county. They wanted to do something special for our Veterans and thought of the home in Cameron. A great gratitude of thanks for thinking of our Veterans!

Missouri Women Veterans News is written and published by Missouri Veterans Commission staff.

Service to Veterans Director, Stan Baughn
Editor and Women Veterans Coordinator, Karen Etzler
Layout and Copy Assistant, Pamela Robbins
Webmaster, Bonnie McNeill-Boyt



www.mvc.dps.mo.gov

Sticker Sent Yes/No (please circle one)



State of Missouri Women Veterans

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime phone: _____

Email address: _____

Birth date: _____ / _____ / _____
Day Month Year

Place of Birth _____
City/State

Service (Circle one) USA USMC USN USAF OTHER _____

Service dates: From _____ To _____
From _____ To _____

Receiving VA or Medical Benefits: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what benefit: _____ (i.e. pension, comp., medical, etc.)

Have received benefits in the past: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what benefit: _____

Would you like a veteran's Service Officer in your local area to contact you to explain your Potential benefits? Yes _____ No _____

To receive your free Woman Veteran State Sticker

Return this to: Missouri Veterans Commission/Karen Etzler

Women Veterans Coordinator/VSO

525 Jules, Room 320

St. Joseph, MO 64501

816/387-2841

or send a request via email to: Karen.Etzler@mvc.dps.mo.gov